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USU Student Organic Farm Newsletter

Plants, Soils, and Climate

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What's New On The Farm

Many hands make light work, as the saying goes. We've had so much volunteer help, including friends, CSA members and their kids. Now that we're getting some skills under our belts, we've been able to provide some help to other growers, too, which is fun. We've helped set up irrigation and low tunnels for research plots, and planted and pounded posts with the permaculture garden team at the UCC property near Logan Canyon. In a few weeks we'll put out a call to help planting for the fall, and in the meantime, we can always use a hand with weeding and other tasks around the farm if you feel like spending some time in the fresh air and the sunshine.

Solving for some number that isn't zero

I've never been very good with numbers, but this week, I realized that the whole process of planning for planting, germinating and nurturing various types of veggies from seed to harvest has been more frustrating than it should be because I don't like to set goals I'm not sure I can meet. Hard numbers like germination rates and days to maturity are actually fuzzy around the edges because they're based on ideal growing conditions, so we overseed, overplant and in the end hopefully over-harvest and have surplus to sell and/or donate. We have a lot of assets, even beyond the invaluable structures and tools the farm owns or accesses. We have fixed variables like the team's work ethic, hours of daylight, cool evening and morning temperatures, and field fertility. There are nevertheless so many unknown variables we are just beginning to experience at full strength, like pests, weeds, daytime temps and solar radiance, and poor germination. But it's not going to keep us from solving this equation! We're learning fast. - Lara

Field Notes

The team's been busy and this week we had some illnesses, changes to the Dream Team and some frenetic days, so no field notes! Ruth returned from her trip abroad and Melanie completed her internship. We're so lucky we've been able to have both of them on the team. We'll return to our regularly scheduled content in the next newsletter.





What's In The Basket

Some new stuff!

Microgreens - Pea and sunflower shoots are great to add to a stir fry, salads and sandwiches

Kale - It's back! Okay, here's the deal with kale - not everything grows well in Utah's daytime temps in the summer, but kale is a bi-annual that doesn't bolt and will germinate in warm soils. Good thing it's a superfood!

Green onions - Another plant that just keeps on growing whatever the temperature. Soups, omelets, salads, pasta, chicken salad - is there anything that doesn't benefit from a sprinkle of finely chopped green onion?

Arugula - SO much arugula! Sorry about the flea beetle damage. We're a little low on summertime-weight floating row cover, which we should be using on all the brassicas. It tastes just as peppery and zingy, though!

Radishes - We love these little jewels! It'll be a few weeks before we have them again because we underplanted, but we should have plenty again in a few weeks!

Strawberries - So the strawberry patch will keep producing for several weeks, only tapering off in mid-July! Feel free to visit and pick your own, or we'll have them at the stand.

Coming up - Chard, beet greens, basil, peas, strawberries and buckwheat microgreens. Soon: Tomatoes and kohlrabi

Un-RECIPE FOR

Strawberry and basil
grilled chicken

An Un-Recipe offers guidelines to create delicious dishes based on the way ingredients, kitchen tools and cooks interact in the kitchen. Email us with questions!

INGREDIENTS:

- Chicken breasts
- Salt & pepper
- Coconut oil
- Strawberries, chopped
- Chopped basil
- Chopped mint
- Juice of half an orange

DIRECTIONS:

1. Season chicken with salt & pepper and cook on grill or grill pan for about 5 minutes per side until done. Timing will vary depending on thickness of breasts.
2. Cook until juices run clear and no longer pink. (If using a grill pan on the stove, grease with about 1/2 tablespoon of coconut oil before placing chicken on it).
3. While chicken cooks, melt coconut oil in a small skillet over medium heat.
4. Add strawberries, basil, mint and orange juice and simmer for about 10 minutes until reduced and thickened.
5. Spoon strawberry sauce over cooked chicken and garnish with additional basil & mint.

